

Myron E. Haynes #64
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Q: Mr. Haynes, when did you first come to Hawaii?

A: In November, 1940.

Q: How did you come to be in Hawaii?

A: I was mobilized with a California National Guard Unit in September of 1940. They were sent over to Hawaii in November of 1940.

Q: What Unit was that?

A: 251st Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapons.

Q: How did you and the other men in the 251st feel about being mobilized?

A: It was kind of an adventure. I had just gotten out of high school in 1939 and kind of on a lark a number of the guys in my class went down and joined the National Guard to go to summer camp in 1939, and then later on we had some war games up in Washington (in the state of Washington). And at that time we heard rumors of a possibility of mobilization and I don't know, we were kind of looking forward to it. Nobody had a job. Nobody was particularly interested in going to school, (very many of them anyway.) I was going to junior college. And we thought well, there was rumbles about the draft and all that sort of thing at the time, and so I thought well I might as well go ahead and go and get my year in and get it over with. Then I can come out and go about the business of trying to find a job.

Q: Do you remember how you came over to Hawaii? Do you remember the ship you came over on?

A: Yes. The *Leonard Wood*, U.S. Army Transport.

Q: What were accommodations like?

A: Uh... I think I was number five bunk (laughter). It was a typical army transport. I think it was about four or five bunks high in the hold.

Q: What sort of weapons was the 251st [*Coast Artillery Regiment*] equipped with?

A: Well, we were a Regiment. Our First Battalion was in San Diego and they had 3-inch guns (anti-aircraft guns). Second Battalion was three Batteries in Long Beach, one Battery in San Pedro, and we had 37mm... well, we got 37's when we got here. When we were in California and mobilized, we had .30 and .50

caliber machine guns, and then when we got to Hawaii, we were issued 37mm anti-aircraft guns.

Q: When you came to Hawaii, where were you sent?

A: Initially to Fort Shafter. Uh, the camp at Malakole was just under construction. The First Battalion from San Diego had left what about two weeks earlier I guess it was. They came on the *Washington* (the liner *Washington*). She had been taken out by the government but hadn't been converted to a troopship yet. So they came in state rooms, and real plush. Here we come on this army transport. But we initially went into a place they called Centipede Gulch in tents at Fort Shafter. We stayed there...

Q: It doesn't sound very inviting.

A: Everybody shook all their clothes out, turned your boots upside down and everything when you got up in the morning. You know you're liable to find an 8(c)inch centipede in there if you didn't. But I had forgotten how long we were there actually. And then we moved out to Malakole and were living in tents out there for a while, until we got barracks up... there was an editorial, or and article in the Star Bulletin I guess it was; at the time they nicknamed our outfit the "251st Coral Engineers" because we had to build our own camp, and that's actually, basically what we were doing when the War started. We hadn't finished it yet.

Q: What sort of accommodations or facilities were there over there?

A: There were wooden long barracks, I'd say probably 100 feet long (maybe even a little longer than that), possibly 20 feet wide, with the doors in the middle of the barracks and one on the end. The front end of it was partitioned off for either office space, supply room, or Senior NCO's quarters, or something of that nature. There was about...let's see, I'd say eight bunks probably, on each side, and on either side of the center; probably sixteen bunks on each end... or something along in there... or maybe more than that. It's been quite a while. I don't really remember. All wood, half way up, and then a screen with drop down shutters, mosquito nets...

Q: Were mosquitos pretty bad out there?

A: Oh boy and how!

Q: Was there a lot of Kiawe?

A: Yeah, we had to clear that out. I did a little bit of everything out there. At one point while we were clearing the trees, all of us were engaged in that. At another point I was operating a jack hammer, putting in pipelines for water and sewers, and such as that. I was a carpenter, framing in the buildings, putting roofs on. The last job I had was... we were

right at Barbers Point, just roughly where the Standard Oil Refinery is now. That takes up about half of the area we had. We were stretched out along the coastline there just north of the lighthouse, and we had a lot of nice sand, but we didn't have an area we could swim in because of the coral so close to the surface. So we were trying to develop kind of like a swimming pool in the coral out there. So the job I that had at the time the War started was making up bundles of dynamite and swimming out in, and sticking them down in the faults in the coral, and come back ashore and shoot them and blow the coral out to try and make an area so we could swim there.

Q: I see. What Battery were you in?

A: I was in Battery F.

Q: Was that a 37mm Battery?

A: Yes.

Q: Why don't you describe for me if you would, what happened on December 7th.

A: Well, I had decided to sleep in that morning. I wasn't even going to go to breakfast. I had been out the night before. We were up in Waipahu actually helping wet down a fellow who had just got promoted, so we were a little getting back into the Base. It was about 3:00 I guess, and so I had decided, well, Sunday I won't even bother to go eat.

And while laying there in bed, we heard some aircraft machine gun fire. Well, as I say, we were right on the ocean front over there and we had firing ranges where we would fire out over the water at towed targets (aircraft towed targets). And for a few days prior to this the Marines from Ewa Marine [Corps] Airbase had been over there and they had 2 1/2 ton trucks with mock-ups of the rear cockpits of their airplanes, with their aircraft machine guns in them, and they had been firing at towed targets. So we immediately started cussing out the Marines.

Q: We're talking about towed aircraft targets?

A: Yeah, the airplane would tow on the end of a cable. It was like a wind sock, and we would fire at them as they went by, you know, with machine guns or 37mm. Well, the Marines had been using these aircraft machine guns mounted in the back of the trucks, and we immediately started cussing out the Marines for being out there so early on a quiet Sunday morning.

And then somebody... the way the barracks were arranged, they were four in a row and the latrine was on this end.

Q: Which end was that?

A: That was on the ocean side.

Q: On the ocean side.

A: O.K., on the mauka side was the mess hall. So there was a latrine here, and then four barracks, and then the mess hall ran this way. So to get out of the barracks you had to walk to the center and start out, and then go down to the street (the Battery street) and around whatever barracks were left. If you were in the fourth one, you had to walk around the first three and then up to the mess hall.

So as he started out the center door, he said, "God, I wonder what's going on. It looks like shell bursts. I wonder if they're having some kind of a maneuver or what's happening around by Pearl." And somebody else got up and walked out the door and they're standing there looking at it and they said... another guy says, "Well, by God there's airplanes flying through those bursts!"

So about that time I begin to get a little more curious and I got up and walked down to the door and we were standing there watching it, and sure enough you could see the bursts going off and I guess these were some of the three-inch from the ships. And about that time we heard a machine gun (aircraft machine gun) go off again and down the line of the barracks right at.... like I tell the people here, if I was on the roof with a broomstick, I think I could have hit the guy... came this Zero, strafing the line of barracks and right when he banked up to take off, we saw that big red "meatball". And everybody went, "Oh God!" We knew what was happening then. There wasn't any question about it.

Q: Oh boy, that must have been quite a feeling there.

A: Another probably a couple of months at the most I would have been out. My enlistment had expired in the National Guard but we were automatically extended and they were beginning to release a few guys whose enlistments had expired (their initial National Guard enlistment) Well probably, fortunately I again... I feel all through the War I was very lucky, but those that did get out were immediately snapped back up and most of them ended up in the Infantry, so I stayed in the artillery in anti-aircraft.

Q: Tell me, what did you Battery... did your Battery get organized and take up a position?

A: Uh, of course there was an immediate complete shock to everybody and when we realized what was going on, everybody started getting into their uniforms (their fatigues) and gathering up their weapons, and helmets, and gas masks, and everything that we had, and started getting out into the street. And one of the lieutenants came by and he's blowing his whistle telling everybody to fall in, and everybody's telling him where he can stick it. They're not about to fall in out there (laughter). They're diving underneath the barracks and when the planes would go by and... our big problem was we had no ammunition for our 37mm guns; didn't have a round. It was all at Lualualei about ten miles down the road in Nanakuli. And our 37 and 50 caliber machine guns were torn down in the ordinance shed. We had boxes of ammunition stored off at another location out there by the firing ranges, all boxed up loose. The... it had to be loaded. We had hand loaders

that would load ten rounds at a time and ...

Q: Is that 37mm ammunition?

A: No, that was .50 caliber; we didn't have any 37 at all. The only thing we had to retaliate with was the old 1903 Springfield rifle that we were equipped with. Everybody got a few rounds of that ammunition as they were loading in the belts for the .30 caliber machine gun. When the planes would come by, we'd bang at them with the 03's. And it seemed like everybody just got their machine guns in operation at almost the identical moment. Uh, you would hear rifle fire and these planes were just going back and forth at their will and strafing us. Then all of a sudden it just seemed like everybody got machine guns in action and we were officially credited, I understand, with downing one and possibly one other plane. Uh, we didn't get any bombs. They were picking us up probably on their way back from Pearl or Ewa Marine [Air] Base, or wherever they were. Uh, and when we finally did get some firepower in the air, very shortly after that they left.

Q: Well did your Battery take up a field position?

A: Yeah. We should have been on Ford Island. We by batteries gun positions were one Ford Island. We were anti-aircraft defense for Pearl Harbor and Ford Island (or part of it.) We moved out when we finally got organized; got our trucks down, got guns hooked up, and we moved out into an area over in Aiea. Of course then they had all sugar cane fields... over about where the Kam Drive-in Theater is (in that vicinity.) We moved back up into the hill up there and established a gun position. Some of the other guns from our Battery were over where Richardson Center is on the bluff over there. I'm not exactly sure where the rest of them went that particular day. We stayed there that night and then moved out to Ford Island the following morning.

Q: How did it take for them to get ammunition to you?

A: It was quite late in the day before we got our first 37mm ammunition.

Q: The day of December 7th?

A: Yes. uh huh.

Q: That night, the night of December 7th, when the planes came in from the Enterprise, did you see the firing on those planes?

A: Yeah. In fact we participated in it.

Q: Could you describe that?

A: Well, we were like I say, up there in the field where we were looking right down into the Harbor, and we saw these planes coming in. They were coming in with their running lights on and they were making a sweep around. And of course we had very poor

communication. In fact I don't where our communication even went to; I guess probably to our Battery headquarters, and that was about it. I don't know where they were hooked in to.

But we saw, as I remember it, one single strand of what appeared to be machine gun tracer bullets going up into the air, and within seconds I never saw such a cone of fire anyplace before or since in my life. The place just exploded and everybody was throwing everything that they could throw into the air. And how any of those planes got out of there I'll never understand, but some of them did and unfortunately some didn't. I understand that one of our Batteries, the one over here in Richardson Center, was involved in hitting one of the planes as they made the sweep past there.

We later heard, of course, there was all kinds of rumors going around and stories, but we were told that when they came in that they were supposed to have blinked some sort of recognition signal. They came in with their running lights on and the wrong signal was given and somebody out there opened fire on them and that's all it took, you know. Whether that's true or not I have no idea. It was a tragic thing but one of those things that happen.

Q: Sounds like things were pretty confused.

A: Oh... completely confused. Uh, I'm glad we didn't try to get out onto Ford Island that evening or that night. We probably wouldn't have made it. They... of course they had... we found out later that there were many, many of the survivors off the ships, that you know, they would gather a group and give them a gun, and show them how to load it, and how to pull the trigger, and say now this is yours, you know. Of course some of these guys, particularly the sailors from some of the crews had never been exposed to a gun in their life; had no idea what it was all about.

When we finally did get out there, part of my job was to check on all of the gun positions on Ford Island, and then we'd have to travel from one to the other and I probably got challenged every ten feet going around Ford Island you know.
(laughter)

Q: Must have been a lot of tension, a lot of rumors going around...

A: Yeah there were. There were paratroops had been dropped, and that the Japanese were landing troops on the North Shore, and oh there was all kinds of things going on that day, and of course none of them true.

Q: Were you married at that time to your wife?

A: No. I was 19 years old when the War started. I had enlisted in the National Guard when I was 16. I was still 17 when we were mobilized by a couple of days, and sent over here. And then I had turned 19 in September, and I went back... well I stayed here at Ford Island until about March, I believe it was, of '42, and I got transferred.

There was a Regular Army unit here, the 98th Coast Artillery. We formed a 3rd Battalion of the 98th; an automatic weapons

battalion, and we went to Schofield Barracks and we were training them. We got 40mm in you know. We had the new 40mm by that time, and we were in training. We had very, very little equipment. We had a wrench that would take the barrel out of the gun, and I think a couple of pipe wrenches and a screwdriver, and I think that was about all the tools we had. We had to take these guns apart, clean them out, train crews (and I had never seen a 40mm before, but based on what I knew from a 37mm, I had got promoted.) I was a corporal when I was in this 251st. I got promoted to Sergeant and we started training.

Well, we stayed there until the battle of Midway came up. It was eminent. They moved up out to Dillingham Field out at Mokuleia and they had two, as I remember, two fighter squadrons and a bomb squadron out there. We set up anti-aircraft defense because they thought they were coming here. If they hadn't stopped them at Midway, they would have been back here. But we had to continue our training and everything else after we got dug in out there.

And I stayed here until June of 1943, there at Mokuleia and then I went back to California, again on a cadre to train a new battalion; and that one they called the 798th Automatic Weapons...(they had dropped the coast artillery in between time) Automatic Weapons Battalion. We completed about a year of training there, including training with the 4th Air Force and armored troops up a Camp Cook, and we were out at Edward Air Force Base, training with the Air Force.

And there were 32 battalions in training at Camp Hun near Riverside, right across the street from March Field, where the air base is. And at one time every unit out there received a telegram to suspend further training pending further orders. About a week later we were one of two battalions ordered to resume our anti-aircraft training. The other thirty were all shipped to Fort Hood, Texas and trained for six weeks in the infantry and sent to Europe (laughter). As I said earlier, I felt I was very fortunate throughout the whole War. I went to Europe for a year, still in the anti-aircraft artillery, and ended up in Salzburg, Austria.

Q: Well tell me, as someone who has worked with both 37mm and 40mm anti-aircraft guns, how would you compare the two weapons?

A: Oh, the 40mm was much better. It had a lot more range, had a bigger shell of course, was easier to handle, had better fire control equipment, and everything else. It was a much better weapon.

Q: Well, thank you. I appreciate your..

A: I got a couple of other points I might tell you about if you'd like?

Q: Oh sure! Yeah please.

A: Cause I get started and I don't want to quit you know(laughter.) Uh, while we were out here on Ford Island and we were... do you know where the communications station is they built during WWII, where the old admirals quarters, the CO, the airbase?

Q: I'm not really sure.

A: It's on this end of it. Ford Island we'll say goes this way; the runway here, O.K.? And the *Arizona* Memorial is here. It's on this end. There's a big old house and there was a two story house.

Q: That's the east end?

A: Pardon?

Q: The east end?

A: Uh huh. Uh, the *Solace* used to tie up right straight in front of us out there. O.K., we sat there and watched the efforts to get that 5th mini sub that came into the Harbor out there a few days after the War started.

Q: Oh! Why don't you tell me about that?

A: It had apparently got under the *Solace* and they knew it was there and they were trying to get it but every time they would start up the *Solace* and move it, their sub would move with it. So it just moved around from place to place. So finally they decided on a way of getting it. They, uh, first we didn't know what was going on; then we finally got the word from sailors on what was happening. So they hooked up some cables to the *Solace* and a couple of tugs and they towed her off, and two PT boats made across and kicked the ash cans off the tail end and scratched the last one of the mini subs that was out there. It was kind of an interesting thing to watch.

The rest of the time we used to sit out there with the scopes on our range finder and watch the nurses sunbathe on the *Solace* (laughter). But uh... (sigh) That's about it I guess really. I can't think of...

Q: O.K., well, as I said, I appreciate your taking the time to sit here and talk to us.